

Message Text

UNCLASSIFIED

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14

ACTION NEA-06

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P * 160805Z JAN 74

FM USINT BAGHDAD

TO USDOC WASHDC PRIORITY

AMEMBASSY BEIRUT

INFO SECSTATE WASHDC 729

UNCLAS BAGHDAD 30

BEIRUT FOR RTDO

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: BEXP, IZ

SUBJECT: IRAQI INTEREST IN GENERAL MOTORS VEHICLES

1. ON JAN 16 GENERAL AUTOMOBILE COMPANY SENT CABLE TO GENERAL MOTORS NEW YORK AS FOLLOWS: "PLEASE SEND URGENTLY PRICE LIST FULL RANGE YOUR SALOON (SIC) CARS ENABLING STUDY IMPORT POSSIBILITY ACCORDINGLY INDICATING FREIGHT CHARGES TO BASRA SEPARATELY". COMPANY SENT COPY OF CABLE TO GM BEIRUT OFFICE.

2. GENERAL AUTOMOBILE COMPANY IS STATE MONOPOLY FOR IMPORTATION TRANSPORT VEHICLES. IT COMES UNDER GENERAL TRADE ESTABLISHMENT OF MINISTRY OF ECONOMY. ON JAN 15 I WAS CONTACTED BY CHAIRMAN OF BOARD OF GENERAL TRADE ESTABLISHMENT ABDUL WAHAB ALKASAB WHO GAVE ME COPY OF CABLE AND SAID GENERAL AUTOMOBILE COMPANY HAD GREEN LIGHT TO IMPORT SOME AMERICAN CARS IF THE PRICE IS RIGHT. THEY PARTICULARLY INTERESTED IN CHEVROLET PICK-UP TRUCK AND IMPALA SEDAN. HE SPOKE IN TERMS OF 1,000 PICK-UPS AND 500 IMPALAS, AGAIN DEPENDING UPON PRICE AND DELIVERY DATES. IMPALAS WOULD BE USED FOR BOTH OFFICIAL PURPOSES AND TO SELL ON PRIVATE MARKET.

3. COMMENT: THIS QUERY MAY REPRESENT NOT ONLY SUBSTANTIAL EXPORT ORDER, BUT EXCELLENT OPPORTUNITY FOR U.S. AUTOMOBILES TO BREAK INTO IRAQI MARKET FOR FIRST TIME

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SINCE 1967. RECOMMEND COMMERCE CONTACT CHEVROLET
DIVISION GM AND URGE THEM ACT QUICKLY. THIS APPEARS TO
BE PRIORITY PROJECT WITH HIGH LEVEL APPROVAL DESIGNED TO
SPEND GROWING OIL REVENUES IN MANNER THAT GIVES QUICK
AND OBVIOUS RESULTS.

4. FOR BEIRUT: RECOMMEND THAT GM REPRESENTATIVE BEIRUT
VISIT BAGHDAD ASAP TO DISCUSS PRICE QUOTATIONS AND
TRANSPORT COSTS WITH ALKASAB. I CAN PROVIDE MORE DETAILS
IF REQUIRED. LOWRIE

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NNN

*** Current Handling Restrictions *** n/a

*** Current Classification *** UNCLASSIFIED

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